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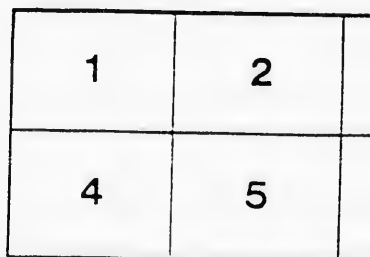
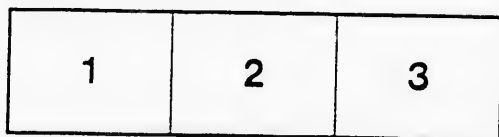
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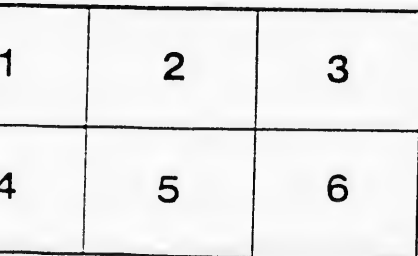
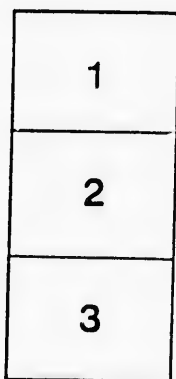
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PUBLICATION No. 1

THE REV. DR. BLACK,  
The Pioneer of Presbyterianism in the North West.

REV. PROFESSOR BRYCE, M.A., LL.B.,  
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# THE REV. DR. BLACK.

REV. PROFESSOR BRYCE'S INTERESTING REMINISCENCES OF KILDONAN'S  
DEAD PASTOR.

THE PIONEER OF PRESBYTERIANISM IN THE NORTH WEST.

INDIAN MISSIONS AND THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCHES.

The Rev. Prof. Bryce, in pursuance to announcement, read a paper in Knox Hall, Monday night, on the life and labors of the late Rev. Dr. Black. A large and thoroughly appreciative audience had assembled, and the speaker was listened to with pleasure and attention. In introducing his subject, Rev. Prof. Bryce stated that he was afraid that the paper which he had written might not prove as interesting as some might desire; but he had promised to write one, and had chosen a subject very different to what he would have done had he been asked to deliver an address. The theme which he had chosen was "Life Acts and Reminiscences of Dr. Black, our Presbyterian Pioneer."

Last year I had the pleasure of visiting in one of the most beautiful parts of Scotland, along the borders, a former Canadian minister. Staying for a few days with him at Canonbie, on the spot where Scott tells us took place, "the racing and chasing on Cannobie Lee," one day we drove through valleys of most exquisite beauty to the little town of Langholm, nestling in the bosom of the hills, in the valley of the Esk. After attending a Presbytery meeting of the Church of Scotland, we adjourned to the Presbytery dinner, which was conducted with all the formalities of the "olden time." While at dinner one of the members said to me, "Oh, I'm the minister of the parish of Eskdale Muir, where your first minister on Red River, Rev. John Black, was born." I regretted not being able to go and see the parish, with its moors and sheep-walks, but was glad to have been so near it, and to have heard of it from the parish minister, who seemed rejoiced to know that a lad from his parish had been the Presbyterian Pioneer in so vast a territory as the North-West. On coming out to America with his family, the Dr. Gries-shire had lived for a time in the State of New York, and coming over to Canada as a young man, was induced to enter the ministry. This was about the year 1815. That and the preceding were years of greatest moment in the religious history of Canada. The wave of enthusiasm which spread over Scotland in 1813 was felt a year later in Canada, and the Free

Church of Canada began its infant career. One of the first acts of the young synod was to establish Knox College, in Toronto. Of this college John Black became one of the first students. Among his fellow students were Dr. Wardrope, of Guelph, John Scott, of North Bruce, Prof. M. McLaren, of Toronto, and others well known in Canada. A successful student, he was especially well versed in the ancient classics. On completing his college course, the young probationer was engaged by the French Canadian Missionary Society as agent for the Society. With a gift for languages, the energetic agent of the Society undertook to learn French, and gained such familiarity with it that he could use it colloquially, and even in public address. To the last days of his life Dr. Black's pronunciation bore traces of this early acquaintance with the French tongue.

RED RIVER.

While the young student was thus preparing for his life work, a field of labor was being brought into shape for him. Fifteen hundred miles northwest of Toronto, a community of Highlanders were earnestly praying and working to have a pastor, of the faith of their fathers. It would be a story long to tell in detail, did we undertake it to relate how in 1811-12 a band of Sutherlandshire Highlanders came by way of Hudson's Bay, under the patronage of the Earl of Selkirk, to establish the first settlement in Rupert's Land. This little band grew to some hundreds by the year 1816, and in 1817 obtained from Lord Selkirk a promise that a minister should be sent to them of their own faith. Lord Selkirk, on returning to England, was harassed by legal difficulties, but did not forget his promise, for he left it in the hands of his confidential agent to obtain a minister for his colony. Lord Selkirk, in 1820, was compelled to go to the south of France for his health and never returned. His agent, who belonged to the Church of England, betrayed his trust, and by the Hudson's Bay Company a minister was sent, who found these Highland colonists very stubborn, and at first disposed to repeat the tragedy of Jenny Geddes. Rev.

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Messrs. West and Jones, the first Church of England ministers to the Selkirk Colony, were men of broad charity and religious zeal. The Highland families of Kildonan, however, nursed their own faith by the fireside, preserved the use of their own psalms, kept up family worship and prayer meetings from house to house, and those who know the history of Covenanting times will remember that this too was the true faith preserved in Scotland in persecuting times.

It is true the early pastors mentioned did endeavor to become "all things to all men," for they laid aside parts of the liturgy, and adopted the Scottish version of the psalms in the church at St. John. But, with the peculiar tenacity of their race, the Selkirk settlers persevered in their efforts by petition and message to obtain a Mother Church in Scotland to the Church minister. The Hudson's Bay Company authorities were against them. It is related that a petition sent by the settlers by way of York Factory to the Church of Scotland came back some months after being sent on the top of a keg of butter to the settlement. At last, it is said that a petition carried home and recommended by a Scotch doctor, Surgeon of the detachment of Her Majesty's troops, the Sixth Regiment, which was quartered at Red River from 1806 to 1818, fell into the hands of Dr. Robert Burns, so well known in Canada as one of the fathers of the church, and that the church in Canada was asked to undertake the duty of sending out the Red River pioneer. There was much difficulty in finding anyone willing to go to this "Ultima Thule." The church, fixed, however, on the successful agent of the French Canadian Missionary Society, and he, unable to escape from the pressing call of duty to a field offering few attractions,

#### UNDEROOK HIS LIFE OF TOIL,

and journeyed alone to the Northwestern solitudes. In August, 1851, he reached the Mississippi at the Falls of St. Anthony, where Minneapolis now stands, and, through the kindness of Governor Ramsay, crossed the plains to Pembina, and thence arrived in Kildonan on the 19th of September.

#### HIS LIFE.

Our pioneer missionary's life divides itself into three periods of about ten years each.

I. The life of a missionary, when he was the only Presbyterian minister in Rupert's Land - 1851-1862.

II. When other missionaries were sent out to his aid, reaching the number of four at the end of this period - 1862-1870.

III. Presbytery of Manitoba established, and Presbyterianism took present phase - 1870-1882.

As our object is chiefly to give a personal sketch, we shall not elaborate these periods.

#### FIRST INTERVIEW.

I remember well my first meeting with Dr. Black. It was near the end of October, 1871. That year the General Assembly had resolved to establish a col-

lege in Manitoba, and the Rev. Mr. Fletcher, the Commissioner, had been in Ontario during the Summer, in its interests, and now we were returning. From a point, 60 or 70 miles on an incomplete railway from St. Paul, we took, some 100 miles distant from Winnipeg, our leap into the wilderness. The covered stage, drawn by four horses, was our conveyance. The prairie roads were beautiful, and we howled along at a fine rate. Soon we reached the upper waters of Red River, crossed to the west side, and then, after a short run, back to the east side. The Northern Pacific Railway had not yet reached Red River. Five or six days' ride brought us to Winnipeg. We crossed the Assiniboine, passed Fort Tarry, which was then a point of remarkable, even tragic interest, as the spot where the Scott murder had been committed in the year before. Down Main Street we came and alighted at the Davis House, which proved too full to accommodate us. There was no other place that we knew of in Winnipeg, and Winnipeg itself was a little wretched looking village of some 300 souls. Those of us who were new comers had not entertained very high expectations, but I confess that the one wide street without grading, without a sidewalk, running between two rows of log houses, no two of them alike, and isolated and positively ugly, caused my heart to sink in looking on this as the future scene of action. So Winnipeg afforded us no shelter, we started on about 8 o'clock that night, as the sky was clear and the roads good, to walk to Kildonan Manse. On arriving there, we met the pastor of Kildonan who had been looking anxiously for our coming. He was a quick-moving, active man, then of about 50. Of medium size, he was of a wiry make. His heavy head of hair was turning a little gray. He had on moccasins. His face beamed with a kindly smile when he spoke, and his gestures were rapid and well marked. We talked late into the night of our journey, of the Assembly, of Red River, and of the future. There was plenty of work awaiting us, he informed us. My companion was to occupy Portage la Prairie. The College must be begun immediately. We retired to rest in Kildonan's hospitable manse, and soon enough found that there was plenty to do in the spiritual harvest field of this new land. On the following Sabbath we attended one service in Kildonan, being in Winnipeg the other part of the day. Kildonan Church struck us as something different from what we were accustomed to even in our oldest Canadian settlements. It is just in shape and general appearance like a country parish church in Scotland, as if indeed Kildonan in Sutherlandshire had been transplanted to Red River. I remember well the high pulpit, now gone, and Dr. Black ascending it in gown and bands, and feet shod in moccasins, which everybody wore then, and which the doctor, to the end of life, preferred to shoes. The church manse, school and partly finished college building, were the visible embodiment of Presbyterianism on Red River.

## RED RIVER OF OLD.

Our missionary pioneer saw little, or comparatively little change in the Red River settlements between 1851 and 1870. Progress was very slow. There were those in the settlement who would have preferred to have had it so remain. As I remember hearing Dr. Black once say, "There are some animals that prefer to lie in peace at the bottom of a pool, to be undisturbed." It is true during this period the village of Winnipeg was begun. An adventurous mortal named McKenney, was the first who dared to face the adverse public opinion that it was impossible to live away from the river bank. This revolutionary event took place in the year 1861, when the building now used as an auction room on the corner of Main Street and Portage Avenue was built. It was prophesied that it could not withstand the wind, and would be swept away. It did require props. Further, it was in a swamp, and in Spring it would need to be built with a boat to float in. It was compared in other respects to a Noah's Ark in appearance. The second building was built by Mr. Dreyer on the opposite now Donaldson's—corner. The settlement up and down the river from Winnipeg consisted of houses along the river bank, each one on a narrow strip running back, as in Lower Canada. The houses are chiefly log and generally thatched. The better houses of the well-to-do usually had a roof with four facets, known as a "pavilion" roof, or, as I once heard it called up the Assiniboine by an incorrect speaker, a "rebellion roof." The settlers manufactured almost all the articles they needed. While all farmed a little, one was a carpenter, another a blacksmith, another a weaver, and so on. Their furniture was chiefly home made. There was not a chair to be bought or borrowed in Winnipeg in 1871. The new settlers chiefly used boxes and trunks to sit upon. It was a common belief that brick could not be made in the country. There were few chimneys. There were some of mud, but a bit of stove-pipe was the common resource. Dr. Schultz had erected the low brick buildings where the Potter House stands shortly before 1871, but popular opinion consigned them to speedy destruction by wind and frost. The ceilings of houses were done with wood, and plaster was looked on as a doubtful and dangerous innovation. The people of the country, were, many of them, engaged in "tramping," i. e. in taking loads of fur to St. Paul on the famous Red River carts, which came back laden with merchandise. They all kept cattle; and some fine herds, now disappeared, were then to be seen upon the plains. I have seen large bands of native horses, some of which though five and six years old had never been in a stable. Hay cutting was begun on a certain day. It was illegal to begin sooner. At 12 o'clock at night the settlers were scattered over the plains, and soon as 12 was past of the appointed day, each cut around as wide a space of grass as possible, and that was his, and was so regarded. The Hudson's Bay

Company was in the habit of taking eight bushels of wheat only from each settler, and this, except to supply the Indians, was the only market. There was little inducement to farm. Accordingly the influx of Canadians even in 1871 raised the prices of provisions and made food scarce. I can remember a load of provisions arriving at Christmas from St. Paul by sleigh and being so great a boon, that the little newspaper of the time announced as baying come: "a supply of turkeys, hams, and other delicacies." During Winter we were cut off from the outside world. Sheriff Ross is said in early days to have got the "London Times" for the year, and to have read through one every day, being just a year behind. The mail then came once a month. In 1871 it was twice or three a week. In Winter we saw once an interval of twenty-one days without a mail. There was no telegraph. We cheered ourselves with the reflection that "if we didn't know anything about our friends, they did not know anything about us, the loss being mutual. The merchants used all to run out of certain lines of goods toward Spring. Salt has been known to have been exhausted; coal oil also, and so on. The common mercantile answer to the enquiring purchaser for all articles not on hand was: "We expect them in by the first boat." Arithmeticians used to calculate that to hold all that every merchant expected would take a fleet of a dozen boats as large as the one long wished for vessel. The arrival of the first boat was certainly the event of the year, and you breathed freely after its arrival as being again a "citizen of the world." Such was the Red River in which our pioneer missionary spent the first twenty years of his ministerial life. It is noticeable that all who passed through it look back to it now with fond regrets. Life moved slowly, but men were thus saved from the immense pressure of the present. There was a sort of rural, Eden-like simplicity among the people, contrasting with the business sharpness and keenness of the present. The people had fewer wants, and few people were overwhelmed with debt. But there are no Elysian fields any more, and the halcyon days are past.

## CRISES.

In a life of thirty years in a new country one is called on to pass through times of trial and distress. In the life of Dr. Black such periods were not wanting.

## THE FLOOD, 1852.

The first year after his arrival the Red River broke forth from its limits and for miles the Red River Valley became one vast lake. The site of the city of Winnipeg was entirely submerged, a thing that has not happened since. The subject of our sketch then occupied the manse erected by the Selkirk settlers, and which still stands, though somewhat out of repair. Dr. Black used to point out the water line of the flood about the base of the windows of the manse. The people were in consternation. It did them little good to be told that the floods of 1820 had been a great deal worse. The settlers

saw the river gradually rise till it surrounded their homes; by and by houses and barns that could not withstand the force of the water, especially on Point Douglas, across which a swift current ran, were seen floating down the stream. Almost all the settlers, among whom was their minister, went back from the river several miles and were encamped on the rising ground of Little Stony Mountain. Last year Ex-Judge Thom related to me his experience during the flood. He then dwelt in the building now occupied by the Bishop in Rupert's Land. The occupants of the house were driven to the second story, and dwelt there till the flood, which arose from the jamming of the ice, allowed the waters to escape. The people were to be congratulated that very few lives were lost. A contrast to the floods we are constantly hearing of, such as that on the Missouri two years ago, or on the Mississippi, or during this very year in Germany. When the waters were assuaged, the Kildonan pastor and his people returned to their homes, and as in the days of Noah, erected their altar on the dry land again. They were not prevented from sowing grain and reaping a harvest that year.

THE FAMINE.

The contiguity of the Red River to wide districts of Dakota, Iowa and Utah has, during one or two periods during the last seventy years, been a source of danger. In the vast deserts of these western States, myriads of grasshoppers spring up as if from the parched soil of the sandy plains. When these pests are excessively numerous in the States named, some bands of the excess fly toward the boundary and cross the line. In 1868, having been seldom present during the preceding forty years, the grasshopper appeared from the South-West on the Red River. The destruction of the crops ensued. The kindness of the people in Canada and elsewhere manifested itself in sending relief. On the Committee of Relief for distributing the supplies sent, our pioneer was an active and useful member. The Kildonan people were a thrifty and well-to-do people, and few instances were known of their receiving aid. Upon the clergy the work of the Committee largely fell, and only those who have been through it can tell the expenditure of sympathy, and the anxious care there is in a year of national calamity.

THE REBELLION.

As if a year of security were not enough, a section of the community raised the flag of insurrection in the year following, 1869. The French half-breeds had always been turbulent and troublesome. Not only in the early history of the country, but in its later history they had a strange way of turning out when their compatriots fell into the toils of the law, and with guns in their hands to the number of several hundreds, coming in to preserve the peace. In 1819 a French half-breed, named Sayer, was brought up for an offense against the Hudson's Bay Company. Sheriff Ross relates the benevolent action of the Metis as follows: "At the moment Sayer entered the court, about

twenty of the half-breeds, all armed, took up their station at the Court House door as sentinels, and held in their possession the arms of the deputation of twelve sent into the court to watch over Sayer. At the outer gate of the court yard about fifty others were placed as a guard, and the couriers kept in constant motion going the rounds and conveying intelligence of the proceedings in court to the main body outside." No such honors are paid our Judges now, as they administer justice. This event took place two years before our missionary's arrival. The turbulent nature of the Metis remains, and is the great explanation of the rising of 1880-70. Some writers of our time represent this rebellion as the case of a patriotic people seeking their rights. It is only with the action of the Kildonan people and their pastor at this juncture that we have now to do. Their pastor was a man of peace. He counseled neutrality, or non-interference with the French who had seized the place, which, indeed, was the counsel of fort, which, indeed, was the counsel of the leading English residents. A difference of opinion has always prevailed among the English-speaking people as to this action. Was it right to have become partners, in any sense, with these desperadoes? This was a burning question in 1871 and for several years after. The first thing that gave peace and rest to the public mind was the court presided over by the late Chief Justice to whom, by the way, this country owes a great debt of gratitude for crushing the spirit of turbulence and disorder, finding Leppine guilty of murder. This decision indicated the position of those who opposed the French half-breeds as rebels, and showed that a firm resistance should have been made to the impudent conduct of the insurgents. Many a time have Dr. Black and I talked the matter over, and though we never agreed on it, yet nobody could help admiring the motives and regarding favorably the part taken by the good man in this, the greatest crisis of his Red River life.

DOMESTIC LIFE.

We shall not enter into the life of the good and true man, to give that fierce glare of publicity that is given to men nowadays by the daily press, of how men eat, and sleep and walk. This is overdone. Yet, what is anyone's life if judged simply by public appearances. It is in the moments of abundance and rest in the home we see the man as he is. Few have ever had stronger domestic feelings than Dr. Black. He loved his home, his wife and children of all earthly things the best. His partner in life was a daughter of Sheriff Ross, one of the most influential men of the country, whose own and family's names are preserved on the streets of our city. Ross, James, William, Gemina, Louisa and others. Three sons and three daughters were left to mourn her loss on the death of Mrs. Black in 1873; she was a woman of mind, most hospitable, and well-known for her kindness to the poor and unfortunate. It was painful to stand beside the desolate pastor, as his companion during the twenty years of

solitary missionary labor, was taken from him. He was cut to the quick. On a biting day in March he buried his dead, and all the world seemed very dark to him. His heart was heavy as he looked upon his six sweet rosebuds, while the rose that had bloomed amongst them was cut from off the branch.

#### "GRANNY" ROSS.

One of the most devoted and welcomed visitors at the Kildonan Manse, was the old lady still in Colony Gardens, in the City of Winnipeg, the widow of Sheriff Ross, the mother of Mrs. Black. She was the daughter of a great chief of the O-Kanagans, across the Mountains. Sheriff Ross had gone out to Oregon first with the Astor Fur Company. He had entered the Hudson's Bay Company, and with his young Indian bride, crossed the Rocky Mountains, and came to the Red River Colony between 1820-30. Eleven children, sons and daughters, grew up to be men and women in the family at Colony Gardens, only one of whom now remains. The old lady, an earnest Christian, always took an interest in the cause so dear to the heart of Dr. Black, who was her idol. Her happiness was complete when she visited the Kildonan household, even in the days of the present Mrs. Black, who survives as Dr. Black's widow. Granny still delights to hear approach the footsteps of the minister, though her favorite is gone, and though the language of her childhood is now and then heard as she speaks in her acquired tongue, she still retains, at the advanced age of 80, all her faculties.

#### THE PREACHER.

As a preacher Dr. Black undoubtedly excelled. His preaching was generally of the fervid order, and as to method, what the experts call textual. In acute analysis of the phrases and clauses, of his text he excelled. He had a great power of close analysis. Accordingly he confined himself closely to his text, and was always fresh and suggestive in his thoughts. Probably his most striking feature as a preacher was his flow of language, and his faculty of amplification. Dr. Black was, as we have said, a peculiarly sensitive man; his emotions were easily touched, and often in the pulpit he was almost overpowered by his feelings when dealing with the sad or the pathetic. But as he dealt with wrong and evil, his moral indignation was at times so roused that he almost rose to the sublimity of a prophet in his denunciation of sin. He faithfully prepared his work, and though gifted with much facility of speech always wrote out his sermons. The people of Kildonan had a high appreciation of their minister as a preacher, and his visits to Knox Church were always welcome.

#### THE PASTOR.

As the pastor and adviser of his people, was the side of his work which to Dr. Black himself was probably the most congenial. His figure going from house to house remains impressed upon my memory. It is true his congregation was compact, and on the Red River, the newspaper was quite an unnecessary medium of

communication, as "every one knew everything about everybody," and in this way the woes and disappointments and differences of the people came only too readily for his own comfort to the pastor's ears. But wherever he could be of service the faithful shepherd was promptly on hand, even with the most wayward and rebellious of the flock. Even he was not free from opposition. A handful of troublesome men may be a very thorn in the side of the pastor, even when the vast majority idolize him. Dr. Black's patience and gentleness enabled him to meet with these "troubles in Israel," and he performed his pastoral duties unflinchingly, even to the "unthankful and the evil." During his entire ministry he visited twice a year regularly his whole congregation, maintaining short religious service in each house, and inquiring into the circumstances of each family. He pursued the good old plan of announcing what part of the congregation he would visit on a certain day, and with no visit on that day, in company with the elder of the district, he might be seen with a light plaid about his shoulders, with moccasined foot, and staff in hand, proceeding from house to house on his kindly errand.

#### THE SOCIAL REFORMER.

Believing that the Bible and its methods should be taken as a guide in all matters both of doctrine and life, Dr. Black was most earnest in his efforts for the distribution of the Scriptures. The Bible Society of which he was almost from its organization in 1870 till the day of his death, the President, has done much in this Province. The scattered settlements have all been united, even Little Saskatchewan and Turtle Mountain. Our pioneer was strongly in favor of reading the Bible and encouraging religious instruction in the Public Schools. Dr. Black was an earnest advocate of total abstinence, and consistently practised his own doctrine. He used to tell with much satisfaction, that in the old Red River settlement days, the ministers of the Church of England and himself were in the habit of going through all the parishes holding meetings in behalf of temperance. His parish was during the length of his ministry as a whole remarkably moral and temperate. Dr. Black was a most ardent friend of education. From the time of his coming the Kildonan school was kept vigorously at work, when the schools in other parts of the settlement were very poor. With a grant from the Hudson's Bay Company to assist, the Kildonan school was kept up by subscription. There was no municipal organization in the country, and no machinery till 1871 for levying a tax for school purposes. Dr. Black was on the Board of Education from its establishment until he resigned a few years before his death. He was undoubtedly the chief man in taking the steps that led to the establishment of the University of Manitoba College. At the time of its establishment Kildonan was the Presbyterian center of the country. It was natural that the college should be established there. When Winnipeg grew

to be a place of a couple of thousand, it was seen that the college should be here, and by direction of the General Assembly the transference was made. Dr. Black was on its Board of Management, and was one of its representatives in the Council of the University of Manitoba. He received in recognition of his high services to the church, the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Queen's, College, Kingston.

#### INDIAN MISSIONS.

It could not be supposed that a man of the ardent and generous disposition of the pastor of Kildonan would restrict his sympathies and efforts to his own parish. He had a sympathy for the heathen, and especially for those at his own door, the Red Indians. The increase of the white element was so slow during the first 20 years of his ministry that there was little call for home mission extensions. The mission to the Indians was the child of his own creation, and it was natural he should cherish it with peculiar affection. He was chief adviser of the committee in Toronto from 1846 to 1870, as to the Saskatchewan Mission; and after the formation of the Presbytery of Manitoba he was Convener of its Foreign Mission Committee till his death. He saw Prince Albert grow up around our mission and become the most considerable settlement of the North-West Territories in the 16 years between 1846 and his death. The Riding Mountain Mission, the Fort Ellice Sioux Reserve Mission, and the Mission at Fort Pelly, were all begun and fostered by his advice. He was popular with all the Indians, and no doubt paid the penalty of popularity with the red men, of bestowing freely of his goods to those who came so constantly to his door.

With his slender income, never exceeding \$1,000 from his congregation, he struggled on, the friend and benefactor of the poor Indian, and of the destitute new settler. His hospitable door was always on the swing. To the young men of this congregation it may not be unsuitable that I should refer to Dr. Black's relations to

#### KNOX CHURCH, WINNIPEG.

The various offshoots of the Kildonan Congregation may be mentioned as Headingly, to some extent Prince Albert, perhaps High Bluff, and large contributions of the young people of the parish, to Springfield, Sunnyside, Milbrook and Grassmere. The most thriving child of Kildonan is Knox Church, Winnipeg, and I suppose, grandchild, St. Andrew's, Winnipeg, too. For a good many years before the transfer to Canada, Dr. Black had maintained a fortnightly occasional service in the old Court House, just outside the walls of Fort Garry, for the members of Kildonan residing within reach of the Fort. The Ross, Bannatyne and Linklater families are the best known of the little handful that attended these services. It was thought best to have a church erected in the village of Winnipeg, as at that time Fort Garry and Winnipeg were quite distinct. Accordingly Dr. Black and Mr. Bannatyne obtained from the Hudson's Bay Company

a lot of undelimited limits, on which they proposed to "erect a small Presbyterian Church"—in fact, a sort of "chapel of ease" for Kildonan. This is the site of old Knox Church. A lot was about the same time given to the Church of England, but though now a thing of the past, there was a considerable pond between the two small edifices, which Governor McTavish, who gave the lots, jocularly remarked would serve as a gulf fixed between the two. Dr. Black obtained about \$400 from friends in Canada to assist in building this church, 50x30, and which may still be seen as the first section of the rather unsightly stables in rear of Knox Church. This was begun in 1848, but was not completed and occupied till 1870. An effort was now made to give one service a Sunday to the village of a hundred or two of people. The Kildonan session had charge of the matter, and Dr. Black, Mr. McNabb and Mr. Whimster teacher of Kildonan, came in turns, keeping up the services. I remember distinctly the appearance of the isolated little church in 1871, when it became my duty to superintend it, and from which date regular services twice a day and a Sunday School have been maintained. The Presbyterians of the military of the expedition of 1870 fitted up the inside. Two small rooms were taken off the interior, leaving a space for seats, which accommodated about seventy persons. The pulpit was a very considerable structure, with a high Gothic wooden erection at the back of it, of the highest style of art then in vogue in the country.

During that first Winter of 1871, the congregation numbered about 40 persons, of whom three were women. The remainder were chiefly young men, now a number of them the leading business men of Winnipeg. On the outside of the building upon the crest of the roof, were four posts fastened together, on which, it is surmised, the designers intended to have erected a tower, "four square to all the winds of heaven." But the tower had never got further than the erection of the upright posts. In its uncompleted state it was an eye-sore, and it was the general opinion that it would not add much to the beauty of the structure if completed. One day the posts were gone. It is rumored that the sexton, acting on a hint from some quarter, had ascended the roof with his saw, and having accomplished his work, like the Arabs after folding their tents "had silently stolen away." I remember Dr. Black was considerably disturbed by the action of the vigorous young congregation, which was organized in 1872, when it began its career by adopting instrumental music. Kildonan being a Highland congregation, had strong views on the "organ question." Dr. Black was not by any means strongly opposed to the organ, but was rather a neutral on the subject, but quite a ripple was caused on the Presbyterian stream, when Knox Church, at a congregational meeting, unanimously voted for the "organ." Knox Church was supplied during the two and a half years chiefly from the college, till 1874, at which

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time the little band of three elders and 70 members called the Rev. James Robertson to be the pastor. It was a matter of great rejoicing to Dr. Black and the Presbytery, that the congregation and its new minister began as a self-sustaining charge. It is an interesting fact that Dr. Cochrane, the present Moderator of the General Assembly, was called by Knox Church in 1873.

#### A WARM FRIEND.

One of our pioneer's strong points was his unwavering faith, his steadfastness and constancy as a friend. It was his delight to sit and converse on almost any topic, so general and miscellaneous had been his reading. But the thing he was most at home in was conversation as to the Christian life, its hopes and its fears. There was no one who delighted more in throwing off all ceremony and telling his own states of mind and his relation to questions of duty and to Christ. While he was a good historian and well versed in classics, and had a fine knowledge of men and things, yet the spiritual interests of his family and his people were ever with him the uppermost thought. His last illness was connected by all those who knew him best with the long revival

services of the Winter of 1880-81 in his church, which resulted in a great blessing to the congregation, but in a state of bodily prostration to him. He left home for some months in 1881 looking for health, but he sought in vain. It was one of the greatest regrets of his friends that, though present at the General Assembly in Kingston in 1881, on the position of Moderator, the highest place in the church being offered him, he was unable to accept it on account of his health. He returned to Kildonan in July, but sinking and gaining strength again at intervals, he died on the 1th of February, 1882.

Do you seek for a record of his labors? You may see them in Presbyterianism in Manitoba to-day. His voice of kindness, conscientiousness and love for the truth still speaks, though he is dead. The memory of his hardships, trials and successes will be treasured up by his friends. As we study the history of our Presbyterian cause, we see everywhere the trace of the hand of the pioneer. As the highest praise of his work, I say as was said of the architect of St. Paul's Cathedral, for his monument, "Circumspice" look around you.







